In Mariele Neudecker's *Default Twilight* (below) colours mutate to create a constantly shifting landscape. *Road* (top right) by Jeremy Akerman deals with memory and loss. In *Text* (below right) Susan Morris uses words culled from psychology textbooks

The boredom factor

Looking at computer art in an office surrounded by white noise, it is hard to make as much brain space for contemplation as you would in a gallery. Nonetheless *Boredom*, a kind of group show of work by eight artists published on CD Rom by the Cambridge Darkroom Gallery, has sufficient variety and ease of use to make it worth persevering. Despite its title (and some of the work) this is not an exercise in being boring. As

curator Susan Morris says in the introduction: "pleasure is not excluded from this exhibition, nor is there within the works a sense of only exhaustion or depletion – terms or states perhaps normally associated with boredom".

Morris's own contribution, *Text*, is one of the most interesting. Consisting of page after page of scrolling texts it resembles the random act of flipping through the pages of a book. The words are culled from psychology text books dealing with the chronic boredom that is a symptom of depression. They range from the banal and abstract to the illuminating: "Longing can be best understood as an emotional trap". Variations in pace, fonts and type sizes mean that the screen action is compelling. Occasionally Morris bleeds the text off the edges of the screen breaking the concentration and suggesting in the viewer those feelings of alienation and marginalisation referred to in the texts.

Jeremy Akerman's piece *Road: (I was thinking about a time once)* uses sound, film and stills photography. A computer-generated female voice narrates while

MOST FREQUENTLY THE SCHIZOPHRENIC...

THE FEELING OF LONGING CAN BE UNDERSTOOD AS A MASKING OPERATION COVERING MORE PROFOUND FEELINGS OF DEPRESSION. INNER EMPTINESS, AND DESPAIR. INASMUCH AS THE SENSE OF LONGING HAS BEEN ROMANTICIZED IN OUR CULTURE, IT IS EASY FOR THE ANALYST TO miss WHAT THE PATIENT IS UNCONSCIOUSLY COMMUNICATING

images of traffic and buildings and people dissolve into one another in an intriguing piece dealing with themes of loss, memory and isolation. Edward Dorrian's *hPrick* uses footage from a low budget porn video to create an interactive piece in which the viewer points-and-clicks to remove items of a woman's clothing. It's fun at first but, as actor William H Macy (*Fargo*, *ER*) said of watching porn as research for his role in *Boogie Nights*: "It was titillating, curious and then boring".

It seems important that computer art should offer something conspicuously different to other art forms. In his accompanying essay *Boredom and Baroque Space* – which appears on the CD Rom's fold-out cover/exhibition catalogue designed by Jonathan Barnbrook – David Bate says that the invention of computer imagery in itself suggests that "the appetite for illusion shows no bounds" and that "new computer-based practices of representation are, without knowing it, precipitating a mutation in representational space". Mariele Neudecker's work Default Twilight offers just that – an endlessly mutating pattern of colour waves that generates abstract representations of land/cityscapes which transform the computer screen into a mesmerising gallery space.

Unfortunately *Boredom* only exists on CD Rom and these were only distributed as a one-off to ICA members at the launch and by post to the Cambridge Darkroom's mailing list. Which means that if you want to see it you probably can't (the Darkroom has only a handful of copies left). And that's a pity since it's an interesting show.